

God's purpose: God is determined to make you like Jesus.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:28-29 ESV

- **The process of becoming like Jesus is a process.**

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV

God's process: God removes whatever blocks Christ's life in us.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. John 15:1-2 ESV

- **God is not just trimming your habits – He's restoring His image in you.**

- Truth
- Repentance
- Faith

God's result: Christ's life becomes visible through us as we bear fruit.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing... ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. John 15:4-5, 8 ESV

- **Where you abide you will abound.**

Fruit is not the ultimate win - Christlikeness is.

- **God is determined to make you like Jesus so that His life overflows through you into the world.**

Let's Talk About It

God's ultimate purpose isn't simply to make our lives easier—it's to make us more like Jesus. Through a lifelong process of transformation, God works through both good and hard seasons to restore His image in us. Like a skilled gardener or sculptor, He lovingly prunes whatever blocks Christ's life from flowing freely—using truth, repentance, and faith to shape us from the inside out. Pruning isn't punishment or disappointment; it's evidence of God's love and commitment to us. As we abide in Christ, His life becomes visible through us, and we bear fruit that reflects His character in our relationships, workplaces, and community. The real win isn't just fruit—it's Christlikeness, with His life overflowing into the world through us.

Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 15:1-8

Discussion questions:

- As our church continues to grow, we're excited to announce that we have additional validated parking and shuttle service at the Varsity Building parking lot (2546 Coyne St.). Check out the parking button on the app for more information.
- Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
- Read Romans 8:28-29, which teaches that God's purpose is to make us like Jesus. How does that reshape what you think "winning" in life really means?
- Read John 15:1-5. When you hear the word pruning, what emotions or reactions come to mind? Have you experienced a season that felt like loss, setback, or disappointment—but later realized God was shaping you through it?
- What might God be pruning in your life right now? (Self-reliance, pride, fear, disordered priorities, something else?)
- The process described was Truth → Repentance → Faith. How would you apply this to your current pruning: God shows you something (truth), invites you to release it (repentance), and calls you to trust Him more deeply (faith)?
- Jesus says fruit comes from abiding, not striving. What does "abiding" look like practically in your daily life? Where do you tend to "abide" when life feels stressful (fear, approval, control, distraction)? What fruit does that produce?

Take a Step

- What would it look like for Christ's life to be more visible in one specific area of your life this week?

Here's My Prayer

Father, thank You for loving me enough not to leave me as I am. Even when pruning feels uncomfortable, help me trust that You are forming Christ in me. Show me what needs to be released, give me courage to repent, and deepen my faith as I learn to abide in You. Let Your life flow through me so that others see Jesus in the way I live. In Jesus' name, amen.